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## Trustees OK \$1.2 million more in cuts

by **Shannon Barry, Milpitas Post**

Posted: 03/10/2010 03:36:59 PM PST

Updated: 03/10/2010 03:37:00 PM PST

Trustees reluctantly took action to approve deeper cuts to Milpitas Unified School District spending during the Board of Education meeting Tuesday evening.

"I am getting to a point where I actually hate March," said Superintendent Karl Black. "... This is my eighth March as superintendent and five of those ... I had to request budget reductions and it's just been very, very difficult and very, very sad, and here we are again."

The latest response comes after Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's budget proposal, which could widen the deficit from \$1.5 million to nearly \$7 million in the 2011-12 school year for the Milpitas Unified School District.

District staff is advancing plans to garner enough support to pass a parcel tax expected to bring in \$1.4 million to \$1.6 million annually for five years, if passed in the June election. But even if this passes, the district will be left with a large hole to fill, Black said.

To cover a portion of the deficit, Black first presented a report recommending \$1.2 million in budget reductions spread throughout the district for 2010-11 during the school board meeting Feb. 9:

n District office reductions with \$567,000 in savings. These cuts are broken down by not assigning the position of at-risk specialist, with a \$87,000 salary, once the current one retires; tier 3 flexibility of \$180,000; reducing 2010 summer school with \$100,000 in savings; and a change in workers compensation spending amounting to \$200,000.

n Maintenance,

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Operations and Transportation reductions with \$100,000 in savings. This includes not assigning the position of supervisor for maintenance and grounds once the current person resigns.

n Elementary school reductions with \$300,000 in savings. These savings would come from increasing class sizes in first and second grade to a 24:1 student-teacher ratio, up from 20:1.

n Closing Community Day School with \$133,000 in savings. The last time staff made budget reductions less than a year ago this program for at-risk students was relocated from its location on the hill to a classroom situated between Calaveras Hills High School and the district office. With less than 20 students enrolled in the program, Black said it is no longer cost effective for the district to support. Each student previously enrolled will be placed in services like county programs that would best meet their individual needs.

n Reducing Milpitas Adult Education programs with \$100,000 in savings. Black projects stopping one class and not continuing the Community-based English tutoring program.

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"That is my recommendation, reluctantly," Black summarized before trustees made a decision on the action item.

After hearing a clarification comment from a resident about how more, not less, summer school classes are needed for struggling students and having no new questions from trustees, Boardmember William Foulk "reluctantly" moved to approve the cuts. The board unanimously approved.

The impact of such cuts was seen mere minutes later as Cheryl Jordan, assistant superintendent of human resources, detailed the teachers who will soon be affected.

She asked board members to review a list and adopt a resolution containing the criteria for determining an order of seniority for the district's certificated employees.

The 2009-10 Certificated Seniority/Credential List, validated by certificated staff, outlines the 455 employees across the 13 school sites within the district and their start dates, assignments, credentials and any additional information like a special education credential, breadth of credentials or teaching experience at different subject areas or grade levels to break any ties that might occur for those employees with the same date of first paid service. Any ties occurring after application of such criteria would then be resolved by lottery.

This was the first necessary step the Board of Education unanimously approved in order for district staff to make what Jordan called a more difficult resolution.

"So we are asking you to approve reducing certificated staffing by those services we deemed are no longer needed because of our budget cuts," she said.

Such cuts include 17 full-time equivalent positions in first and second grade because of the increase in classroom size, a full-time Community Day School teacher due to the program's elimination, and a Spanish teacher at Thomas Russell Middle School.

"It's with great reluctance that I ask you to approve this resolution ..." Jordan concluded.

Board trustees were tight-lipped, the bulk of their comments coming to reiterate they were making a decision out of their control.

"It will be people affected but there is really no choice," Foulk said.

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